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ABSTRACT

This teacher's guide presents teaching suggestions and presentation materials about citizen action in the global environment. Focusing on the nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the lessons describe the roles NGOs play in positively influencing future trends in social development, natural resources management, and environmental quality. NGOs are defined using examples from the local, regional, state, national, and international levels. The unit is designed for four class periods with lessons entitled: (1) "General Discussion of NGOs"; (2) "Three Case Studies"; (3) "Components of Citizen Action: A Local Issue"; and (4) "Concluding Activity." Student handouts are included for classroom use. (EH)

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TEACHER'S GUIDE

To World Resources

Citizen Action

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Teacher's Guide

to

World Resources:

Citizen Action

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Teacher's Guide

to

World Resources:

Citizen Action

Comprehensive Coursework on the
Global Environment

World Resources Institute
1709 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20006

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Using World Resources Teacher's Guide Units

World Resources *Teacher's Guide* Units are designed for use at the secondary school level (although we have reports of successful use at the middle school and college levels). They weave together lessons about both environment and development, both globally and locally. They draw on skills and knowledge from the physical and biological sciences, social studies, history, economics, civics, and global studies.

Information and analysis used in the Units are drawn from World Resources Institute (WRI) publications and databases. All units are written by curricula writers and reviewed by educators as well as by technical experts. The Units are updated and revised periodically based on feedback from classroom teachers who have used the materials.

Our intent is to provide easy-to-use, inexpensive classroom materials that contain the most recent and authoritative information on the global environment because we believe it is crucial that the next generation of leaders and citizens understand the issues described here.

The complete set of *Teacher's Guide* Units includes the following topics:

- Biodiversity
- Car Trouble
- Citizen Action
- Energy, Atmosphere, and Climate
- Natural Resource Economics
- Oceans and Coasts
- Population, Poverty, and Land Degradation
- Sustainable Development
- Two Giants: China and India
- Watershed Pollution
- Women, Equity, and Sustainable Development

These units have been revised and updated with the most recent data available as of spring 1994.

Inside Each Unit

Each *Teacher's Guide* Unit should contain enough teaching suggestions and presentation materials to teach one to several classes on the topic without securing additional resources. On the other hand, each unit is designed to point teachers and students to additional resources and to offer suggestions for expanded coursework. Specifically, each unit contains objectives, a lesson plan, student handouts, overhead transparency masters, student enrichment activities, suggestions for further reading, and suggested audiovisual resources.

Using the Units for Environmental Studies

The *Teacher's Guide* Units provide a comprehensive, consistent yet highly flexible set of materials for environmental studies courses. They can be used in conjunction with an environmental science textbook to give students an understanding of basic environmental systems and cycles. Or they can be used in a social studies context to examine some of the tough problems and choices we face as a society.

Educators who want to go beyond the *Teacher's Guide* Units can read related WRI publications, which provide the basic data, source materials, and analysis for the Units. These publications are listed at the beginning of each unit. A free catalog can be obtained by calling 1-800-822-0504.

Integrating Teacher's Guide Units into the Curriculum

Secondary school teachers frequently mention the difficulty of integrating environmental issues into a tightly packed curriculum. As much as they would like to teach about the environment, they must devote class time to required subjects.

To help them place these issues in their curricula, we have coded each lesson plan and each student enrichment activity to the draft national performance assessment standards for science, math, history, civics, and geography. These standards are being developed as part of the national Goals 2000 program in the U.S. Department of Education. The standards themselves are being developed, discussed, and revised by educational organizations in nine academic disciplines. They are expected to be approved at the national level, then offered to states to incorporate into their own academic assessment plans. Although this process will take several years, we have compiled lists of assessment standards for grades 9 through 12 from drafts available in spring 1994 to offer some guidance to teachers.

A complete list of the draft standards for Grades 9 through 12 appears in Appendix B, which should be mailed to you with your order. Appendix A provides a bibliography and list of related organizations.

Integrating Global Environmental Education into High School Curricula

In an effort to link lessons about global environment and development issues to required school curricula, we have identified which pages of the lesson plan and which student enrichment activities in this *Teacher's Guide* Unit relate to the draft national performance standards developed recently for civics, geography, history, math, and science in grades 9 through 12.

These voluntary national standards are part of the Goals 2000 program mandated by the Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1994 under the direction of the U.S. Department of Education. Among other things, Goals 2000 will establish a set of goals or performance standards for grades 4, 8, and 12 in the subjects listed above plus English, the arts, and foreign languages. These goals will be available to the states for incorporation into their own sets of educational performance standards. Each set of draft standards was developed by a professional education organization and has been presented at numerous educational conferences for review and comment. The draft standards used here are those available as of spring 1994.

Although many countries have national performance standards, the United States (and Canada) have treasured a decentralized educational system that sets education goals at the district or state level. Goals 2000 is the first attempt to identify a set of general education objectives that all students in the country are expected to achieve. As might be expected, there is some controversy over whether there should be national education goals—even voluntary ones—and if so, what they should be.

Regardless of the final outcome, we feel the draft goals do reflect some consensus among educators about what material should be covered at various grade levels, and as such, offer some guidance for integrating environmental education into the curricula.

Only those goals relevant to this unit are listed here. A complete list of goals appears in the 1994 *Teacher's Guide to World Resources*. Copies of reports outlining the goals for each subject area can be obtained from the education organizations listed at the top of each set of goals on this page. Information about the Goals 2000 program is available at 1-800-USA-LEARN.

Goals 2000: Draft National Performance Standards

Civics and Government*

(Draft National Standards, October 1993, Center for Civic Education, 5146 Douglas Fir Road, Calabasas, CA 91302-1467)

	Lesson Plan	Enrichment Activity
I. What is Government and What Should it Do?		
4. What are alternative means of organizing governments?		1
III. How Does the Government Established by the Constitution Embody the Principles and Purposes of American Democracy?		
2. What does the national government do and how can it be influenced?	2-9	1-4, 7
3. How are state and local governments organized, what do they do, and how can they be influenced?	2-9	1-4, 7
4. What is the role of law in the American political system?	2-9	
5. How does the American political system provide for choice and opportunities for participation?	2-9	1-4, 7
6. How is public policy formulated and carried out?	2-9	1-4, 7
IV. What is the Relationship of American Politics and Government to World Affairs?		
2. How do the domestic politics and the constitutional principles of the United States affect its relations with the world?	9	
3. How has the United States influenced other nations and how have they influenced American politics and society?	9	
V. What are the Roles of the Citizen in the American Political System?		
1. What is citizenship?	2-9	1-3, 7
2. What are the rights of the citizen?	2-9	1, 7
3. What are the responsibilities of citizens?	2-9	1, 5, 7
4. How can citizens participate in public life?	2-9	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

Note: Only the education goals relevant to this unit are listed.

Geography*

(Draft National Standards October 1993, National Council of Geographic Education, Geography Standards Project, 1600 M Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036)

	Lesson Plan	Enrichment Activity
I. Seeing the World in Spatial Terms		
1. Knows and understands how to use maps, globes, and other graphic tools and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective.		6
V. Environment and Society		
15. Knows the consequences of the interaction between dynamic human and physical systems.		6
16. Knows changes in the meaning, distribution, and importance of resources.		6

Mathematics*

(Draft National Standards, March 1989, The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, Order Processing, 1906 Association Drive, Reston, VA 22091)

	Lesson Plan	Enrichment Activity
X. Statistics		
1. Construct and draw inferences from charts, tables, and graphs that summarize data from real-world situations.		6

Science*

(Draft National Standards, February 1994, National Academy of Sciences, National Research Council, 2101 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20418)

	Lesson Plan	Enrichment Activity
I. Science As Inquiry		
4. Construct and revise scientific explanations and models using logic and evidence.		1
5. Recognize and analyze alternative explanations and models.		1
6. Communicate and defend a scientific argument.		1
III. Life Science		
4. Ecosystems and Human Ecology	5-7	1, 5-7
VI. Science and Technology		
2. Solution Design-Cost, Risk-Benefit Analysis		1
VII. Science and Societal Challenges		
2. Natural Resources	5-7	1, 5-7
3. Environmental Degradation	5-7	1, 5-7
4. Natural and Human-Induced Hazards	5-7	5-7
5. Community Health	6, 7	6, 7
6. Global Change	5	6, 7

Citizen Action

It's happening all over the world. From remote Kenyan villages, the barrios of Mexico City, the rainforests of Malaysia, and churches in downtown Toronto, to the back door of the White House in Washington, D.C., ordinary people are working for change through citizen action. By organizing into groups, they cajole, demand, and persuade governments into saving natural resources, building housing for the poor, and halting the logging of ancient forests. They force industries to reduce pollution levels and persuade financiers to make environmentally sound investments.

Such groups are known as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). During the past decade, NGOs have played, collectively, an increasingly important role around the world. Some NGOs are concerned with protecting the environment, others with advancing human rights. Some are as modest as your local sportsfishing organization, others are international giants. Some foster local entrepreneurship and provide credit to farmers, others educate street children. In a growing number of environmental NGOs, students play important roles.

Although NGOs are as varied as the people who join them, many share common visions. They labor to reduce poverty, advance human development, and manage natural resources for the long- and short-term good. Many begin by tackling a local problem. After succeeding at that level, they form coalitions with other groups to tackle larger problems.

NGOs also share methods. They win victories through community action campaigns, using similar components of management and strategy. NGOs have also planted the seeds of democracy throughout the world by sharing decisionmaking within their own ranks and by giving voice to the poor and the powerless—people who are typically excluded in traditional government decisionmaking.

Objectives

By the time they finish this lesson, students should be able to:

- Define the term "nongovernmental organization" and give local, regional, state, national, and international examples.
- Identify and describe the role of NGOs in a democratic society.
- Describe the roles that NGOs play in positively influencing future trends in social development, natural resources management, and environmental quality.

- Identify and describe how NGOs in developing countries are changing.
- Identify ways students have participated in environmental NGOs in their community, their country, and in developing countries. Identify the level at which students may play the most effective roles.
- Communicate reasons why elementary, middle/junior, secondary and college students should play increasingly active roles in citizen action and NGOs.
- Identify and describe five types of citizen action tactics that various NGOs can and do use.

To fully develop the lesson, use four class periods. If students decide to take on a real NGO activity or one of the enrichment exercises, the lesson will expand beyond those four periods. The lessons are organized as follows:

Day 1: General Discussion of NGOs

Day 2: Three Case Studies

Day 3: Components of Citizen Action: a Local Issue

Day 4: Concluding Activity

The lesson includes the following materials that may be duplicated.

Student Handouts:

1 Students Tackle Global Warming

2 Incinerator Man Fights For Environmental Justice

3 Superbarrio: A Mexican Superhero

4 Action Campaign Components: How Groups Work for Change

5 Facts About Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs)

Beginning the Lesson

Day 1 Lesson

Copy pages from the following directories or similar ones available at your library: the *Encyclopedia of Associations;* the *National Wildlife Federation Conservation Directory,* the *World Environmental Directory,* or the Sierra Club's *World Directory of Environmental Organizations.* Also look in a large city business phone directory under "Associations." Each student or pair of students should have a page for reference. Bring a large newsprint pad and magic markers to the classroom.

Write the term "nongovernmental organization" on the chalkboard. Ask whether anyone is familiar with the term. Then ask "What do you think it means?" and "Can you give an example of a nongovernmental organization?" Start writing a list of NGOs on one side of the chalkboard.

With students, refine the definition of "nongovernmental organization" and its abbreviation "NGO." The term refers to a host of organizations that are neither part of government nor established to make a profit. Most NGOs are formed to advance a cause or to better the lives of their members. They are funded by member contributions, donations, and/or

grants. Some supplement their income by the sale of products (e.g., Girl Scout cookies, T-shirts, books).

NGOs have been formed around almost every conceivable issue: this chapter considers NGOs that deal, in particular, with protecting the environment or promoting sustainable development. NGOs can be large or small; local, regional, national or international. Some serve only their members, others serve people who need help.

To assist students in understanding the scope of NGOs, and in naming larger national and international groups, pass around photocopied pages of association listings. Have students pick one or two for the chalkboard list, looking especially for NGOs with local offices or chapters. Ask them to describe the mission of each if possible.

Students in industrialized countries will probably be more familiar with private relief organizations, environmental advocacy groups, political action groups, women's groups, tenants' associations, human rights groups, local development associations, private colleges and hospitals, labor unions, consumer and farm cooperatives.

Tell students that NGOs more typical of developing countries include tribal unions, squatter associations, savings clubs, irrigation user groups, village water associations, peasant leagues, and communal labor-sharing groups. Ask whether students know anything about such groups.

After discussing the wide range of NGOs, have students discuss *why* NGOs exist. Write on the chalkboard: *Why Do We Need NGOs?*

Discuss possible reasons with students, noting their answers on the chalkboard. Major points should include:

- NGOs are established to meet some need or solve some problem that neither the government nor business and industry addresses (or a problem those groups are causing).
- As individuals become frustrated by a situation, they often join in groups because people recognize this simple truth: **there is power in numbers.** They can provide political or economic power for people that otherwise would be poor and powerless.
- Individuals use NGOs as a way to stand up for their own rights and concerns, or for the rights and concerns of others.

Discuss the work of NGOs. On a large newsprint pad write the headings: "Levels of NGOs," "Missions of NGOs" and "Sustainable Development Work of NGOs." Use one sheet for each category. Post sheets on wall and discuss each category briefly. Save for tomorrow's lesson.

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Levels of NGOs

NGOs can be ranked according to size and organization structure.

- *Grassroots organizations.* Organizations that operate in towns, villages, and urban communities and serve members.
- *Service organizations.* Regional and national organizations that support grassroots development.

- *Thematic organizations*. Regional, national, and international NGOs that work in specific areas, such as human rights, environment, disaster relief, or research.
- *Coalitions and networks*. Temporary or permanent linkages among two or more NGOs to work on specific issues.

NGO Missions

NGOs typically emphasize one of the following missions, although some combine more than one:

- *Research*. Scientific monitoring or policy research. Often associated with academic institutions. Results can be used by policymakers.
- *Self help*. Cooperatives, neighborhood associations, tribal associations, women's and minority groups. Meet member needs.
- *Public service*. NGOs that deliver services such as disaster relief. For example, the International Red Cross.
- *Advocacy*. NGOs that promote change in government policies, corporate activities, or consumer behavior.

NGO Sustainable Development Work

Examples of the type of work that NGOs are involved in include:

- *Ecological*. Develop programs for habitat maintenance, ecosystem preservation, captive breeding programs, species reintroduction, soil erosion control, litter control.
- *Consumer*. Ban commerce in endangered or threatened animal species; avoid commerce in rare tropical hardwoods; boycott tuna or promote dolphin-safe fishing.
- *Political*. Lobby officials for conservation/preservation policies; publicize candidates' environmental voting records.
- *Legal*. Promote or discourage actions regarding passage or enforcement of environmental laws and regulations; report legal violations; initiate lawsuits.
- *Educational/persuasive*. Testify before official bodies; report research results; make environmental movies: publish teaching materials for schools and youth groups; provide recreational/educational environmental facilities and events.
- *Community development*. Work with local people to find methods of economic development that improve or maintain environmental quality.

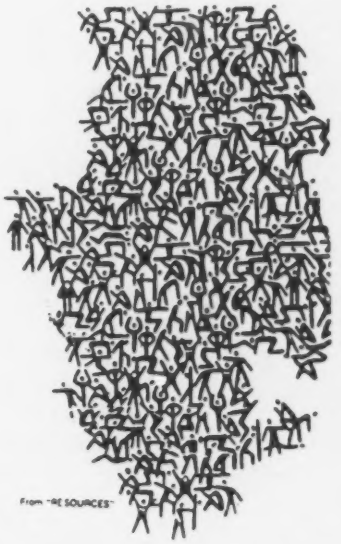
Using the list of NGOs that you developed on the chalkboard, have students identify the levels, missions, and sustainable development work in which each NGO is involved.

Day 2 Lesson

Divide the class into three groups. Give one group **Handout 1, "Students Tackle Global Warming;"** give the second group **Handout 2, "Incinerator Man Fights For Environmental Justice;"** and give the third group **Handout 3, "Superbarrio: A Mexican Superhero."** Each handout describes a campaign by an NGO.

Ask each group to appoint a spokesperson. Have students read their handout and have each group identify the level, mission, and work of the NGO in their handout. Groups should also answer questions at the bottom of the handout page.

Ask the spokesperson to briefly summarize the case study, noting the rank, mission, and work. (See **Day 1 Lesson.**) After each case study is described, use class discussion to answer the questions about each.



Discussing Handout 1, "Students Tackle Global Warming"

How did the students' personal actions—cutting back on CO_2 emissions— affect their political action? In many ways. First of all, it helped them understand the difficulty and complexity of the subject. They became better technically informed by seeing how many sources of CO_2 they used, and the numbers showed which sources were the worst. Second, acting personally made them feel better about asking for petition signatures because they knew they were doing something themselves. Third, their personal actions gave them greater credibility to other students, as well as to politicians and news reporters.

How did coalition-building play a role in this campaign? By contacting existing student environmental organizations, the organizers instantly united large numbers of students, all of whom already cared about the environment. These students were ready to take the campaign to other students and to Washington, D.C. In only three months, the coalition was able to collect 100,000 petition signatures and pledges.

What were the advantages of the coalition being all student members? First, adults were surprised and impressed that students understood such a complex subject. The younger the student, the more impressed they were. Second, in writing their *State of the Earth* address, students naturally simplified the issue into language that was easily understood by everyone. (Adults often have a hard time doing that.) Third, the students impressed their audiences with how much they cared. They pointed out that their generation would be the ones to pay for this generation's mistakes. Fourth, students were already organized in their schools and student organizations. That made it easier for them to campaign among other students, and to form coalitions.

This campaign was a joint effort of students, two adult environmental education advisors, student magazines, and an environmental group. Why did the adults, magazines and environmental group stay in the background? Opponents might write off the campaign as being manipulated by adults—despite the intelligence and high commitment of the children involved. The students offset this disadvantage by being extremely well-prepared on the technical information. Because the students did the work, and wrote the actual speeches, they came across honestly and strongly.

Discussing Handout 2, "Incinerator Man Fights For Environmental Justice"

What makes Incinerator Man an effective device in fighting the powerful forces behind incinerator construction?

His scary visual impact sticks in the memories of both young and old, and reaches even people who may not be able to read written materials.

What makes the Brooklyn Navy Yard incinerator an issue of environmental justice, rather than a simple "not-in-my-back-yard issue?"

The people of Greenpoint and Williamsburg feel that their neighborhood may have been chosen as the site for two incinerators and other hazardous dumps because they are people of color and low income. They believe that their health may be at risk because of this concentration of environmental hazards.

The New York Public Interest Research Group is active in a coalition of neighborhood groups involving people of color, Latinos, and Jewish residents. Why might getting this coalition to work together be difficult? How might the concept of environmental injustice unify them?

Because of their different cultural backgrounds, these groups may not have had frequent interaction. They may have stereotyped images and prejudices against each other. Realizing that they have a common struggle to improve their neighborhood and their health might help them form common goals and ideals.

"Truth Squads" forced mayoral candidates to state their position on the incinerator issue at every public meeting during the campaign. Why is this an effective tactic?

It kept the issue in the newspapers, radio, and TV. It also forced the politicians to constantly re-evaluate the issue, giving them opportunities to change position in response to public opinion.

Discussing Handout 3, "Superbarrio: A Mexican Superhero"

What triggered the development of this popular urban movement? Slow government and international NGO response in helping the victims of the Mexico City earthquake of 1985, which destroyed so much housing.

What was the goal of the movement? To force government agencies and the World Bank to speed up building new housing for the homeless poor. The city government claimed there was a shortage of building sites, but the group pointed out that there were many buildings in poor repair owned by slumlords, who were behind with their taxes. These properties could be expropriated by the city.

Who were the citizen action participants? Hundreds of thousands of earthquake victims. Nonpoor earthquake victims and poor people also joined the movement. Coalitions of neighborhood groups formed within days of the earthquake.

Earthquake victims used several tactics to put pressure on the government. What were they?

- Peaceful demonstrations: they threatened to link hands around the stadium during an internationally televised soccer match.
- Street protests.
- Letters to newspapers, maintaining public debate in media.
- Computers were used to create data bases. These findings were publicized and compared to government claims.
- Imagination and humor in creating a media hero, Superbarrio, who symbolized the popular struggle and generated public debate over housing policy issues.

How did Superbarrio create political drama? Superbarrio was a creation of the barrio groups as a champion of their cause. He was a masked wrestler, a good guy dressed in yellow tights, red cape and a Super- man-like costume with "SB" written on it. Like Superman, he lost his strength under certain conditions—when his mask was removed, or when he was out of sight of the people. Superbarrio's enemies were greedy landlords, party political hacks and the government. He led street demonstrations and publicly challenged his archenemy Catalino Creel, symbol of the greedy landlord, to a wrestling match.

Day 3 Lesson: Citizen Action Campaigns

Duplicate **Handout 4, "Action Campaign Components: How Groups Work for Change,"** and **Handout 5, "Facts about NGOs."** Bring large newsprint sheets and magic markers for three small groups.

As we have seen from numerous examples, most successful grassroots NGOs create change by organizing and mobilizing their members in citizen action campaigns. Tell students that organizing a citizen action campaign takes a lot of work. Successful campaigns usually have several components in common—ways of organizing people and thinking through the campaign. Ask students to brainstorm what the components of good citizen action organizing might be. Write their ideas down on the blackboard.

Next distribute **Handout 4, "Action Campaign Components: How Groups Work for Change."** Run through it with students, checking to see if the class has come up with some of the ideas already.

Ask students to identify urgent environmental problems or conflicts in your school or community. List their ideas on the chalkboard, and come to a general agreement on the subject of most interest.

Help students plan a citizen action campaign to solve the problem. Divide the class into three groups, giving each a large sheet of newsprint and magic marker. Allow remaining class time to plan a campaign, and outline it on the newsprint. One person will report out to the class the following day. The class will compare strategies. Collect newsprint sheets for the following day.

Assign **Handout 5, "Facts about NGOs"** to be read at home.

Day 4 Lesson: Conclusion

Post the campaign strategies on newsprint from Day 3. On another sheet of newsprint, write the following headings:

Citizen Action Components

Group 1 Group 2 Group 3

1. ***Goal:***
2. ***Target audience:***
3. ***Recruiting message:***
4. ***Student involvement:***
5. ***Analysis—for and against:***
6. ***Allies:***
7. ***Care/feeding of members:***
8. ***Overall strategy:***
9. ***Tactics:***
10. ***Evaluation:***

... LIKE MY LATEST OUTFIT?

Ask each group spokesperson to report on the group's citizen action plan. Check off the components (with agreement of the class) that were covered in the strategy.

If the class seems genuinely excited about the project, ask volunteers to form a committee to write a summary of the issue campaign and to present the class idea to an appropriate local NGO. If it is a school issue, ask the committee to use appropriate channels to have the project approved. As a final check, have the group consider the following questions:

Action Analysis Criteria

1. Is there sufficient evidence to warrant action on this issue?
2. Are there alternative actions available for use? What are they?
3. Is the action that the group has chosen the most effective one available?
4. Are there legal consequences of this action? If so, what are they?
5. Will there be social consequences of this action? If so, what are they?
6. Will there be economic consequences of this action? If so, what are they?
7. Do the personal values of members of the group support this action?
8. Does the group understand the beliefs and values of others who are involved in this issue?
9. Does the group understand the procedures necessary to take this action?
10. Does the group have the skills needed to complete this action?
11. Does the group have the courage to take this action?
12. Does the group have the time needed to complete this action?
13. Does the group have all the other resources (other than the above) needed to make this action effective?
14. What are the ecological consequences of this action?

Concluding the Lesson

Write the following sentences on the chalkboard:

NGOs are becoming important in influencing environment and development policy in many parts of the world. They are likely to assume an even greater role in the future.

Use the following questions to evaluate the implications of the statement above. Suggestions for guiding discussion appear below. Encourage students to refer to the case studies discussed previously, their readings, and to draw on their own experience with NGOs.

What do NGOs have to contribute?

- Ability to organize people for effective citizen action.
- Creativity and flexibility.
- Energy from involved, committed people.
- Knowledge of the local environment and culture.
- Technical expertise in larger well-funded groups.

What factors limit the effectiveness of NGOs?

- Many lack money and technical expertise.
- Lack of direct power.
- Fragmentation. Although some NGOs are beginning to work together, many are small and isolated.
- Institutional weaknesses, such as lack of leadership and managerial expertise, lack of technical expertise. Many Southern hemisphere NGOs are especially limited.
- NGOs sometimes leave out the grassroots community—or indigenous peoples, women, minorities and the very poor.
- Some governments ban or suppress NGOs that present alternative approaches or political challenges.

In what ways are NGOs changing?

- NGOs in developing countries are seeking greater autonomy from their Northern hemisphere partners.
- NGOs are joining together in networks and coalitions to share information and coordinate activities.
- NGOs are finding that computer and telecommunications technology are inexpensive ways to share technology and information.
- Some regional and national NGOs in developing countries are taking on new roles in policy research and legal defense.

How can students participate in the work of NGOs in their own community? In developing countries?

- By participating in NGO citizen action campaigns.
- By recruiting other NGO members.
- By lobbying decisionmakers at the local level.
- By studying disciplines useful for future careers in NGO work in developing countries. (Foreign languages, economics, ecology, public health, natural resource policy, hydrology, anthropology, etc.)

Suggestions for Further Reading

- Ruth Caplan and Staff of Environmental Action, *Our Earth, Ourselves* (Bantam Books, New York, 1990).
- Center for Marine Conservation, *A Citizen's Guide To Plastics In The Ocean: More Than A Litter Problem* (Center for Marine Conservation, 1988). Outlines government, legal, and citizen actions aimed at solving marine plastics pollution problems. Many examples of individual and group citizen actions.
- Environmental Protection Agency, *Environmental Equity: Reducing Risk For All Communities.* Vol. 1, 2. EPA230-R-92-008A. June 1992.
- Alan B. Durning, "People Power and Development," *Foreign Policy,* No. 76 (Fall 1989), p. 71.
- *Fighting Toxics: A Manual for Protecting Your Family, Community, and Workplace,* Gary Cohen and John O'Connor, eds. (Island Press, Washington, D.C., 1990).
- Global Tomorrow Coalition, *Citizen's Guide to Global Issues,* Walter H. Corson, ed. (Global Tomorrow Coalition, Washington, D.C., 1985).
- K. Greider, "Against All Odds," *City Limits,* Aug/Sept 1993, p. 34-38.
- Wendy Schaetzel Lesko, *No Kidding Around! America's Young Activists Are Changing Our World and You Can Too* (Information U.S.A., forthcoming). For information, contact the Activism 2000 Project, 3909 Prospect St., Kensington, MD 20895. Phone (301) 946-1858. Oral histories of young citizen activists, supplemented by a resource guide.
- Eric Mann, *L.A.'s Lethal Air: New Strategies for Policy, Organizing, and Action* (Labor/Community Strategy Center, 1991), 80 pg. $15 (Call 818-781-4800).
- John McCormick, *Reclaiming Paradise: The Global Environmental Movement* (Indiana University Press, Indianapolis, 1989).
- Donald Snow, *Inside the Environmental Movement: Meeting the Leadership Challenge* (Island Press, Washington, D.C., 1992).

Audiovisual Resources

- *Blockade: Algonquins Defend the Forest,* (1990), 27 min., National Film Board of Canada. *The Algonquins fight to stop clear-cutting on Verendrye wildlife reserve.*
- Blowpipes and Bulldozers, 60 min., VHS and 16 mm, Gaia Films, available through Bullfrog Films. *The moving story of the Penan, a rainforest tribe in Sarawak, Malaysia, that is protesting the destruction of its homeland by loggers.*
- *Farmers Helping Farmers,* 28 min., VHS and 16 mm, National Film Board of Canada, Bullfrog Films. *Farmers in Canada are funding food-growing projects in direct association with farmers in Kenya and Tanzania. International citizen cooperation without bureaucracy.*
- *In Our Own Backyard: The First Love Canal,* 59 min., VHS, Lynn Corcoran, Bullfrog Films. *Documentary of how residents, whose neighborhood was polluted by toxic wastes, organized. Shows the complexity of the democratic process in action.*
- *The Lorax,* 25 min., VHS and 16 mm., Phoenix Films/BFA. *A classic Dr. Seuss film about a paradise polluted. Did the Lorax, the spokescreature for the environment, win or lose?*
- *Lovejoy's Nuclear War,* Green Mountain Post Films, available through Bullfrog Films. *Documents civil disobedience used to stop nuclear power plant construction in New England.*
- *From Sea to Shining Sea,* Greenpeace USA, Bullfrog Films. *Greenpeace comes to the aid of a New Jersey community by plugging a toxic waste discharge pipe to call attention to pollution.*
- *Time Immemorial,* (1991), 59 min., National Film Board of Canada. *For over a century, the Nisga'a people of northeastern British Columbia fought for title of their land and control of their fisheries and forests.*
- *See page 24 for addresses of video distributors.*

1 Help the Lorax Win

Show the classic Dr. Seuss film *The Lorax* in which the Lorax's Truffula Tree forest is chopped down and its creatures driven out by industrial development. In the end, the environment is destroyed, and the Lorax himself leaves. The industrialist then sees the error of his ways and passes the last Truffula seed to a boy, telling him to replant it. Although the ending is hopeful, the Lorax is still out of a home. Ask students to rewrite the script from the point at which the Lorax first confronts the industrialist using the campaign component guidelines in **Handout 4.** How could the Lorax have organized the woodland creatures? What message, tactics, and media could have been used to get the industrialists to stop destroying the forest? Students may write alternate scripts in groups and act them out before the class.

Skills emphasis:* *Civics I 4, III 2–3, III 5–6, V 1–4; Science I 4–6, VI 2, VII 2–3*

Suggested for use in: *Business, Economics, Environmental Education, Science*

2 Profile an NGO

Using NGO listings (see **Day 1 Lesson**), let each student pick an NGO to profile. Students should write a brief report that includes the following information: name of organization; level of NGO (grassroots, service, thematic, coalition); membership—number of members, who are they; stated goals of the organization. If the NGO engages in citizen action, describe the goal, messages, target audience, tactics, and media of a recent campaign. What changes has this NGO been able to accomplish?

Skills emphasis: *Civics III 2–3, III 5–6, V1*

Suggested for use in: *Social Studies, Environmental Education*

3 Dissect a Campaign

Check the newspapers for a citizen action campaign that is currently taking place in your community or an environmental campaign at local or national level. Have students gather information about the campaign through news clippings, organizational literature, and interviews with leaders. Lead students through an analysis of the campaign using the criteria posed in the **Day 2 Lesson** (state goal, target audience, identify allies, etc.). Where did the campaign succeed? How could it have been improved?

Skills emphasis: *Civics III 2–3, III 5–6, V 1, V 4*

Suggested for use in: *Business, English/Journalism, Environmental Education, Political Science, Social Studies*

4 NGO Business: People and Money

It costs money to operate an NGO. Have the class choose to study the finances of two environmental NGOs: one national or international and one local, grassroots NGO. Send for annual reports from the selected NGOs. Examine the previous year's budget. *Questions to discuss:* Where does this NGO get its income? What did it spend its money on? What did it accomplish? What are its investments? What percentage of the budget paid for administration, as opposed to performing the NGO's actual work (buying land, lobbying, citizen action, research, development projects, etc.?) Compare the grassroots and large NGO programs and budgets as to their administrative costs, program costs, volunteer efforts. What activities, products or services does the NGO offer for its paying members?

Skills emphasis: *Civics III 2–3, III 5–6, V 4*

Suggested for use in: *Business, Environmental Education, Social Studies*

5 Analyze "Environmental" Advertising

Advertisers make effective use of persuasion techniques. Recently, a number of companies have addressed environmental issues in their advertisements. The ads tend to show how a company is working to help the environment or how a product is "friendly" to the environment. Collect examples of companies trying to be more environmentally responsive. (For example, L'Eggs® pantyhose announced that it would no longer package its products in plastic eggs.) Ads by energy companies are especially interesting. Business publications such as the *Wall Street Journal* or Canada's *The Financial Post* are good places to look. Analyze the text and the pictures in the ads to determine the target audience, the message, and the image of the company or product. Are these ads simply using people's concern with the environment as a way to sell their products? Or are they actually improving an old product or presenting a new one that is more environmentally benign? Investigate the claims made in the ad by writing the company for more information and by researching the issue through other sources. Also look for products that are not environmentally friendly (note the upsurge in individual-serving microwave foods with lots of packaging).

Skills emphasis: *Civics V 3; Science III 4, VII 2–4*

Suggested for use in: *Art, Business, Commercial Art, English, Environmental Studies, Social Studies, Science*

See chart of Draft National Performance Standards at beginning of this unit.

6 Join a Student Environmental Monitoring Network

Several national and international organizations join schools in computer networks to monitor their environment and compare their results. In most of the networks, student groups (or schools) take periodic environmental samples or readings, record the data (often on computer) and share information with each other. Some have used their findings as the basis of a campaign or presentation to their city councils.

Many of these organizations combine science, math, environmental issues, and computer activities. Some require long-term commitment on the part of schools and educators.

For more information, contact:

- The Technical Education Research Centers (TERC) Global Laboratory Project, 2067 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02140. Phone (617) 547-0430.
- Caretakers of the Environment International (CEI), Nassauplein 8, 1815 GM Almaar, The Netherlands. Katrin Kelly, Director.
- Caretakers of the Environment, U.S.A., 2216 Schiller Avenue, Willamette, IL 60091. Contact: Ms. Isabel Abrams.
- The Global Rivers Environmental Education Network (GREEN), University of Michigan, 430 E. University Ave., Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1115. Phone (313) 764-1410. Founder: William Stapp. Program Coordinator: Arjen Wals.

Skills emphasis: *Geo I 1, V 15–16; Civics V 4; Math X 1; Science III 4, VII 2–6*

Suggested for use in: *Environmental Issues, Earth Science, Geography, Math, Biology, Ecology*

7 Make It Real: Form an Environmental NGO

If there is clearly an interest in environmental action within the class, have it choose a school or local issue and design a real campaign around it, following the citizen action components. Ideas for school campaigns include:

- Organizing and implementing a recycling program.
- Working with school officials, local, and state forestry officers to plant a "school forest."
- Reducing waste from school facilities or activities.
- Sponsoring a "toxic substance disposal day," working with local agencies.
- Reducing consumers' contribution to global warming.
- Volunteering to work with a community organization to improve their environment.
- Working with a program to tutor poor children in reading, math, or science skills. (See **Unit 1, "Sustainable Development"** of this guide.)

Skills emphasis: *Civics III 2–3, III 5–6, V 1–4; Science III 4, VII 2–6*

Suggested for use in: *Environmental Education, Social Studies, Science*

Students Tackle Global Warming

Alexis Grey was just seven years old at the time. She needed help from her fellow students in dragging the heavy, orange mail bags across the floor of the Senate hearing room. "Excuse me," she asked Senator John Chaffee, "Would you take these petitions to the President when you see him this afternoon?"

Chaffee agreed, and Senator Albert Gore (now vice president of the United States) looked on with amazement at the eight bags, each overflowing with folded papers. "How many [signatures] do you have there?" he asked.

"About 100,000," answered Alexis politely.

One of her fellow students shouted out, "And that's nothing yet! We'll have a million by Earth Day!" The packed Senate hearing room rocked with laughter—and respect.

The stuffed mailbags represented several months of work by about 2 million American students, most of whom were in the fifth and sixth grades. They belonged to a coalition of 15 student environmental organizations across the country who had joined together to help slow the global warming trend.

The student campaign was an outgrowth of an educational experiment sparked by two adults working for the Natural Resources Defense Fund. According to one, Mary Daly, they were upset by the lack of environmental education teaching materials that included any practical citizen action. Daly said they developed a curriculum about carbon dioxide and its impact on global warming. The curriculum was published in *Scholastic Magazine*, reaching thousands of children and their teachers.

It turned out that the children were concerned about the issue and eager to take part in both personal and political action. Students did most of the work from then on—studying the issue, examining U.S. policy, finding out how CO_2 emissions could be reduced.

Most of the student environmental groups had already started out as single-issue groups on other subjects. One group, Concerns about Kid's Environment, of Freeport, Maine, fought styrofoam containers at MacDonalds. It got a state law outlawing styrofoam containers in fast-food restaurants. Another group began as a result of a dying girl's last wish: to begin a project to help the Earth. Many of the groups had already found major funding sources and were "going national" in membership drives. With help from NRDC and several children's magazines, Daly said it was not hard to unite the 15 groups into a coalition.

Together, they became an organization of children 2-million strong from California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin, who called themselves "The Kids Coalition," and united under the "The CO_2 Challenge."

Members of the student coalition each pledged to take personal actions to reduce CO_2 emissions. They also took political action by collecting signatures on petitions to urge the President of the United States to commit the United States at the June 1992 United Nations Earth Summit international conference to reducing CO_2 levels as other industrial nations have pledged.

Personal Action

In the fall of 1991 each student pledged to cut back by 1 ton emissions of CO_2—the primary greenhouse gas—during the year. Their pledges were specific, including:

- Tuning up the family car's engine once a year—saving 900 pounds (408 kilograms) of CO_2.
- Replacing incandescent bulbs with new compact fluorescent bulbs—saving up to 45 pounds (20 kilograms) of CO_2.
- Putting a jacket of insulation on the water heater, saving (depending on whether the heater is electric, oil, or gas) from 260 to 600 pounds (117 to 272 kilograms) of CO_2.
- Chilling out the washing machine by doing four out of five laundry loads in cold water, saving 460 to 200 pounds (209 to 91 kilograms) of CO_2.

Students Tackle Global Warming *(continued)*

- Planting a tree on the south or west side of the home to provide cooling shade, saving 150 pounds (68 kilograms) of CO_2.

Political Action

In February 1992, each group sent a representative to Washington, D.C. to take their political message to the President and members of the U.S. Senate. With the help of their NRDC advisors, they arranged a news conference, testimony before U.S. Senators, and an attempt to deliver over 100,000 petition signatures to President Bush. Their *State of the Earth* address asked the U.S. government to take part in a four-part plan to reduce CO_2 emissions, including provisions to:

- Make producing pollution more expensive, thereby cutting fossil fuel use and increasing alternative energy use.
- Require cars and trucks to get better mileage.
- Save the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, which is threatened by oil drilling
- Reward utilities for energy conservation—much the same as the state of California has rewarded utilities that pledge to cut CO_2 emissions by 20 percent by the year 2000.

The children asked President Bush to "make the same energy-saving effort" as they were doing, leading other Americans in the challenge. Daly said she was amazed at how well prepared the students were on technical issues.

They also asked Bush to attend the Earth Summit. In their news release, the students predicted, "Unless he commits the U.S. to that, no agreement on global warming is possible. Other nations say, "Why should we act if the U.S.—the worlds's biggest source of CO_2—refuses to do its part?"

The students were forewarned that Bush was pretty busy on the day they converged upon Washington—he was putting the final touches on his *State of the Union* address, to be given that night. The White House gatekeeper politely suggested that they take their petitions to the mail room. Instead, they chose to drag the mailbags up to the Dirksen Senate Office Building, where they were to make a presentation at the "Senate Special Children's Hearing on Global Warming" that afternoon.

There, in a standing-room-only hearing room, the three spokespersons of the group delivered their message to the Senators. Before national network television cameras, radio microphones, and newspaper photographers and reporters, the three children spoke. Their voices were heard across the country, including in their home towns.

Senator Gore's press secretary, Marla Romash, said later that the children made a strong impact. "Children are way ahead of adults on understanding the impacts of global warming. These children had a clear message, and delivered it very strongly. The Senators were very impressed."

Romash added, "Not only their presentation, but their entire effort can't help but have an effect." She urged other children to "get involved, and stay involved."

The group planned its next action in New York, when the U.S. agenda for the Earth Summit was to be outlined. Weeks after the Washington meeting Daly said, "thousands of petitions are still coming in every day."

Source: World Resources Institute.

Questions

1. How did the students' personal actions—cutting back on CO_2 emissions—affect their political action?
2. How did coalition-building play a role in the campaign?
3. What were the advantages and disadvantages of the coalition consisting of all student members?
4. This campaign was a joint effort of thousands of students, two adult environmental education advisors, student magazines, and an environmental group. Why did the adults, magazines, and the environmental group stay in the background?

Incinerator Man Fights For Environmental Justice

The Incinerator Man looms 20 feet (6 meters) above the parade-watchers, staring down with his fierce, skull-shaped mask. His filthy breath hisses through chimneys as he marches around Brooklyn's Greenpoint/Williamsburg district. He warns residents that their already-polluted neighborhood may deteriorate even further.

The paper mache Incinerator Man is animated by two students huddled inside directing dry-ice fumes out the gray chimneys. Although an entertaining figure, he marches with a cause: cleaning up a polluted urban neighborhood that residents feel has suffered more than its fair share of environmental insults.

City officials have proposed a second neighborhood incinerator at the Brooklyn Navy Yard; the existing incinerator in Greenpoint violated federal pollution standards until local activists forced its closure in early 1992. Residents near the Navy Yard have the district's lowest median income, ranging from $9,726 to $23,516 annually. Culturally, they are mostly Latino and Hasidic Jews. The proposed incinerator may, in fact, be a classic example of the latest "ism" to hit the talk shows—*environmental racism and classism.*

In 1992 the Greenpoint/Williamsburg city planning district hosted 192 hazardous waste facilities—more than any other district in New York. Twenty of them housed "extremely hazardous" substances, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The materials dumped included poisonous metal compounds, oil and natural gas, and radioactive wastes. The district also logged the highest number of hazardous materials emergency calls (55) in New York during 1992.

Air pollution in the district is considerably worse than average. Residents breathed over 60 times more toxic emissions than the national average for residential neighborhoods in 1987. While the average pollution load for New York City air was 9,292 pounds of toxics per square mile (1,625 kilograms per square kilometer), Greenpoint/Williamsburg air carried 44,099 pounds (19,977 kilograms). In addition the district is criss-crossed by jammed highways, puffing carbon monoxide into "the hood." In early 1994, the New York state environmental department discovered that the 92-acre (37-hectare) Navy Yard was contaminated with lead, arsenic and cadmium. Neighborhood residents are worried that they may be paying for environmental inequities with their health. Boys in the district, for instance, ranked 50 percent higher than the city as a whole for several types of nervous system cancers and leukemia. Although researchers point out that this excess may result from genetic, immunologic or lifestyle differences, environmental causes cannot be ruled out.

Many New York children already have unacceptably high levels of lead in their blood. The proposed Navy Yard incinerator would be allowed to emit an additional 2,628 pounds (1,190 kilograms) of lead into the air annually. Lead can reduce children's intelligence and cause reading disabilities, hand-eye-coordination difficulties, and slowed reaction times. The incinerator would also be allowed to discharge 3,942 pounds (1,785 kilograms) of mercury—a poisonous metal that causes nervous system defects such as loss of short-term memory and visual impairments. The list of approved pollutants for the proposed Brooklyn Navy Yard incinerator also includes a toxic aerial salad of cadmium, beryllium, arsenic, nitrogen oxides, sulfur oxides, particulates, PAHs, zinc, antimony, nickel, chromium, carbon monoxide, hydrogen fluorides, formaldehyde, hydrochloric acid, hydrocarbons and others.

The students who created Incinerator Man are members of the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) who are recruited from local schools and colleges. They are no strangers when they knock on doors around the

Incinerator Man Fights For Environmental Justice *(continued)*

neighborhood. NYPIRG leaders are usually young people who have graduated, but remain active in the organization. NYPIRG is part of the Community Alliance for the Environment (CAFE), a coalition that unites other local groups including the United Jewish Organizations and the Latino-based El Puente.

For some time, NYPIRG members have argued that the incinerator issue is an environmental justice issue—not just a solid waste management issue. Neither is their position a simple "not-in-my-backyard"argument, they say. Instead of telling the city fathers to just make the incinerator go away, they advocate a two-pronged solution. First, reduce the amount of garbage and then recycle more.

The young activists have proposed state legislation to require manufacturers to make less waste and packaging. If the bill passes, they say, the volume of garbage in the city could be cut by 15–20 percent. Second, they contend it is possible to recycle the same amount of garbage as the incinerator would burn. That would leave only a small portion of the city's garbage requiring landfill—as opposed to the city's proposal of landfilling 300,000 tons (272,100 metric tons) of potentially hazardous ash somewhere in Virginia.

The NYPIRG proposal for 15–20 percent garbage reduction, 70 percent recycling, and 5–10 percent landfill and no incineration contrasts starkly with the city's plan—9 percent garbage reduction, 41 percent recycling, and 32 percent burning and landfilling.

The Greenpoint NYPIRG members are inspired by members in Albany, NY, who fought to close an incinerator in an African American neighborhood for seven years. The payoff came in the long winter of 1994 when the prevailing winds suddenly changed and blew black snow from the incinerator onto the governor's mansion. Within two weeks, the incinerator was closed. They also cite 150 incinerator proposals that have been defeated across the country. New waste incinerators have been banned outright in Ontario, Canada, Rhode Island, and Baltimore.

NYPIRG organizer Ludovick Blaine said that hundreds of Greenpoint students and residents joined the fight because they were mostly concerned with their family's health. Other students joined because they were interested in the issue as part of their science, political science, or sociology studies.

Over the years, students and residents created political pressure against the incinerators. In 1991, for instance, they held eight town meetings over nine months; 200–1,200 people attended each meeting.

Other tactics:

A city-wide Lobby Day was held to improve the city's proposed 20-year solid waste management plan. They succeeded in increasing programs and funding for recycling, to lessen the need for incineration.

"Truth Squads" confronted mayoral candidates. At open meetings, student NYPIRG members forced candidates to state their positions on the incinerators. Gradually, the winning candidate "improved" his position.

All-night lobbying sessions kept city council members up until 7:30 a.m. as they considered the solid-waste management plan. The plan emerged with more commitment to recycling and reduced emphasis on incineration at the Navy Yards.

The "Toxic Mile" along part of the New York Marathon race that goes through Greenpoint educated runners—and the media. A series of signs noted, "Are you breathing more heavily? Do you know why?" among other messages. The signs, which pointed out local pollution problems, aimed at embarrassing the city in a highly visible event.

Incinerator Man Fights For Environmental Justice *(continued)*

State legislators were persuaded to introduce a bill that would reduce the amount of garbage produced—especially unneeded packaging.

NYPIRG's young activists are still fighting. Despite the long battle, members note proudly that no new incinerator has been built at the Navy Yard. They also take credit for forcing city government to place greater emphasis on massive recycling, and shutting down two incinerators. State legislators are considering a bill to reduce packaging and waste.

NYPIRG members say that the Incinerator Man will probably march in many more parades alongside committed and energetic students concerned with environmental inequity.

Questions

1. What makes the Brooklyn Navy Yard incinerator an issue of environmental justice, rather than a simple "not-in-my-back-yard issue?"

2. The New York Public Interest Research Group is active in a coalition of neighborhood groups involving people of color, Latinos, and Jewish residents. Why might getting this coalition to work together be difficult? How might the concept of environmental injustice unify them?

3. "Truth Squads" forced mayoral candidates to state their position on the incinerator issue at every public meeting during the campaign. Why is this an effective tactic?

Superbarrio: A Mexican Superhero

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are becoming important conduits for the transmission of information to poor people. According to Sheldon Annis, formerly a fellow at the Overseas Development Council in Washington, D.C., and now a professor at Boston University, the trend is especially evident in better developed and urban areas. He illustrates the point with an example from Mexico City after the 1985 earthquake, when a coalition of earthquake victims and neighborhood organizations lobbied the government and the World Bank to accelerate the rebuilding process.

The Power of Information

In general, the better developed and more urban the context, the more likely that the poor are able to incorporate and benefit from the power of information. The "urban popular movements" that are now a familiar part of the Latin American landscape function, in large measure, by their capacity to spread information, channel anger, and generate shared political purpose. During the past recessionary decade, urban popular movements have regularly mobilized thousands—even hundreds of thousands—of people in the streets of Latin America.

In one case that I have studied—the movement arising in the aftermath of the Mexico City earthquake of 1985—hundreds of thousands of earthquake victims (joined by nonpoor earthquake victims, as well as non-victim poor) joined to create a remarkable movement that forced the government and the World Bank to greatly accelerate the process of housing reconstruction.

Within days [of the quake], a coalition of organizations formed and successfully united earthquake victims and scores of neighborhood organizations. Through deft manipulation of the media and political bartering, the coalition pressured and forced the government into major residential construction programs and other concessions—and then maintained unrelenting pressure to force compliance with what had been promised. Whenever the Mexico government dragged its feet, renewed pressure was applied. In May 1986, for example, the coalition announced that tens of thousands of still-homeless victims would link hands around Aztec Stadium during the internationally televised World Cup Soccer championship. This action was called off only at the last minute when a crash construction program began to show visible results. Eventually, 50,000 units were constructed and another 40,000 units were repaired, more or less on time and approximately within budget.

Creation of a Hero

The earthquake demonstrates the galvanizing force of a natural disaster. But in the aftermath—with the relative success of the reconstruction program—the political energy of the movement waned. It was recaptured not by another natural event, but by a man-made media event: the creation of a popular hero—Superbarrio.

Superbarrio was not an identifiable individual, but a masked wrestler, a good guy sworn to oppose the bureaucracy, the greedy landlord, the party political hacks, and the state. Dressed in his yellow tights, red cape, and SB-emblazoned superhero's mask, Superbarrio led tens of thousands of people in street protests over renters' rights, housing codes, credit for housing construction, and the pace and scale of the government's low-cost housing program. Superbarrio loses his super strength when his mask is removed or when he is removed from the sight of the people. Because of this limitation, he forced embarrassed public officials to negotiate in public—in front of television reporters or on the street in front of cheering crowds.

Superbarrio enlivened Mexican popular politics with audacity and humor. In August 1987, for example, he announced he would wrestle his archenemy Catalino Creel—a takeoff on a soap opera villain, symbolizing the tightfisted greedy landlord—in front of the National Cathedral. The government angrily rejected the unseemly location for a wrestling match. The government's willingness to allow the match at all (and if so, where) became a hotly disputed issue. The debate was a media event in itself. After suffering innumerable political lampoons, the embarrassed government finally reluctantly agreed to let the

Superbarrio: A Mexican Superhero *(continued)*

match be held *behind* the cathedral. The ring was set up; but it mysteriously disappeared in the wee hours of dawn before the scheduled match, prompting taunts, accusations of fraud, government theft, and set off new street protests.

By creating a good-natured media hero who symbolized the popular struggle and who could not be bribed (and was therefore trusted by the people), the behind-the-scenes barrio associations managed to create considerable excitement, a shared pool of knowledge, and a formidable political force.

But Superbarrio was more than street theatre. He reflected the popular movement's growing capacity to put information, not just symbolism, to use. At that time, one tactic of the barrio associations was to force the president of Mexico to negotiate publicly through open letters that appeared in the press. The letters recounted meetings and promises made by housing officials. The government was confronted by barrio groups aggressively demanding a new round of low-cost housing construction and expropriations of properties belonging to landlords who evaded taxes and ignored housing regulations. The government claimed, first, that the housing needs of most victims were being successfully met, and second, that no building sites were available in the earthquake zones for more low-cost construction.

Armed with Information

With an IBM personal computer and a simple Lotus program, the barrio groups rapidly created their own data base. I vividly recall watching a single researcher enter data supplied by a network of organizations. Meanwhile, in the adjoining room, Superbarrio sipped a beer, excoriating the duplicity of the government to a handful of friendly reporters, and leaking his plans to "let the truth be known." Within a few weeks of intense negotiation, the barrio groups were backed with an up-to-date independent data base that listed the names of about 20,000 unserved earthquake victims and homeless families. They then matched this against a second data base of properties which were in violation of city codes, health standards, and paid no property taxes, and thus were eligible for expropriation under Mexican law. (In fairness, rent control laws often make it unprofitable to rent out or maintain properties.) Armed with both information and the means to convey it publicly, the barrio associations were then in a position to argue that such non-taxpaying, semi-abandoned, unsanitary properties in the central city were being held solely for speculation. The properties were not, they argued, in the "social interest," and therefore should be expropriated by the state to provide building sites for the second phase of the National Reconstruction Program.

The fact that the post-earthquake barrio associations could successfully create their own independent data base did not give them the ultimate power of decision making of course. It did significantly affect their negotiating strength and the substance of political bartering. The media guerrilla Superbarrio generated not just jibes, but public debate over serious policy issues.

(Reprinted from *World Resources 1992-93*, pp. 228–229.)

Questions

1. What triggered the development of this popular urban movement?
2. What was the goal of the movement?
3. Who were the citizen action participants?
4. Earthquake victims used many tactics to put pressure on the government. What were the tactics?
5. How did Supervarrio create political drama?
6. How did the movement use high technology in their struggle?
7. What other tactics did the movement use to put pressure on the government?

Action Campaign Components: How Groups Work for Change

Successful nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) compel change by organizing members and other citizens through action campaigns. The difference between success and failure can be the NGO's organizing techniques. The following components empower local citizen action campaigns:

Identify Issues and Goal(s)

- *Narrow the issues.* Beginning with overall concerns, narrow the issues as much as possible. What part of the issue matters the most at this time?
- *Set a specific, simple goal.* Otherwise, NGO members will be overwhelmed or bored by vague, huge tasks.
- *Start with a local objective.* If you can accomplish something on the local level, you'll be better prepared to tackle larger issues. Your NGO will also gain credibility.

Identify Your Target Audience

- *Research.* Find out which part of society has the power to make that change. Your target could be a government agency, an industry, an elected official, or school authorities.
- *Research.* Get to know your target audience. Find out how your target audience works and what motivates its actions.

Tailor your Messages to Recruit Members

Communicate to the whole person, not just the intellect. People join NGOs for many reasons. Your communications should take these into account:

- *People are concerned about the NGO's issue.*
- *People feel powerful instead of helpless in an NGO.*
- *People feel less isolated by joining an NGO.*
- *People feel proud of being useful in an NGO.*

Research and communicate your technical information carefully. Sloppy preparation can lead to bad decisions and damage your credibility and your effort might be shot down completely. It is especially important for students to become well-informed about their issues, because adults may perceive them as being manipulated by older people.

Recognize Student Power

Students have played key roles in environmental and social issues around the world. Why? The reasons are:

- *Young people bring bright ideas.*
- *Young people bring energy and courage.*
- *Students are often better informed than adults.*
- *Young people are better at recognizing—and rejecting—doubletalk.*
- *Students bring NGOs large numbers, organized groups.*
- *Adults think of young people as more honest.*

Action Campaign Components: How Groups Work for Change *(continued)*

Analyze the Situation

- *Who and what are on your side?* Identify people and conditions that could be helpful to your effort.
- *What are you up against?* Identify obstacles to your effort, both people and/or situations. Is another organization opposed to your goal or efforts?

Recruit Allies into a Coalition

- *What other groups want the same changes as your group?* Persuading other groups to join forces in a coalition will make you more powerful.
- *What other groups have power and influence over your target audience?* You may also be able to persuade influential groups to join your efforts, even if they might not be organized around your issue. Look at campaign contributors, business groups, consumer groups, or voter organizations.
- *Build a coalition—carefully.* While coalition-building can multiply your political clout, remember that the bigger the organization, the harder it is to manage.

Keep Members Happy

To keep your NGO members active and committed, never take them for granted.

- *Create group identity.* Make your new NGO members *do something* to participate in your NGO, even if it's just symbolic, such as filling out a membership card, answering a survey, paying a membership fee, or wearing a button with your slogan.
- *Reward your members.* Use such mechanisms as: *Recognition.* Publish articles in a newsletter or your local paper, give out certificates of appreciation, make organizational T-shirts and buttons. *Celebrations.* Mark important victories or progress with a celebration. Make fun part of your NGO's work.
- *Avoid cliques.* NGO members can form "insider" groups that make newcomers feel like "outsiders." Originators of an NGO may feel that newcomers dilute the purity of the group, but a truly open group will win more battles and represent the community better.

Choose Strategies and Tactics

- *Stop, look and think.* All too often, NGOs choose citizen action tactics and media efforts before thinking through the most effective ways of influencing their targets.
- *Involve members in planning.* Grassroots members will have good ideas for your citizen action battle plan. They'll be more willing to carry out the plan if they took part in forming it.
- *Choose citizen actions appropriate for membership and budget.* Don't ask members to do something they can't do or can't afford.

In considering tactics, design an overall strategy. Combine a number of tactics and communications. Most social change efforts require a series of events, not just one big effort. Choose tactics that will hit your target. Tactics range from quiet deeds that members can do at home to mass political actions that appear on the front pages and on TV nightly news. NGO tactics that have helped win citizen action battles include:

- *Letters-to-the-editor campaigns* (newspapers, magazines).
- *Letters to lawmakers* at local, state and national levels.
- *Petition drives.*
- *Endorsing or disclaiming political candidates.*

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Action Campaign Components: How Groups Work for Change *(continued)*

- *Fund-raising—to purchase conservation areas, alternative technology etc.*
- *Organizing marches and rallies.* (Check local laws).
- *Boycotting environmental offenders, or certain taxes.* (Check laws.)
- *Setting good examples*: such as tree-plantings, litter cleanups, etc.
- *Teaching workshops to demonstrate alternatives* (alternative technologies, agricultural methods, community hygiene methods).
- *Performing protest drama.* (See Superbarrio.)
- *Filing legal actions,* such as lawsuits.
- *Creating physical barriers.* (such as the Greenpeace ship occupying the area of the French nuclear bomb testing in the Pacific.)
- *Theme parades, celebrations.* (such as Samba dancing clubs in Brazil leading parades about protecting the golden lion tamarins, an endangered species.)
- *Creating music.* In some cultures, spontaneous songs about environmental or social change are quickly recorded and widely played on radio. They can have powerful effects.

Make sure your plans are lawful. Many communities have laws about public gatherings, parades, demonstrations, and boycotts. If your plans ignore these laws, your members may be put at legal risk. Tactics that deliberately disobey the law are called civil disobedience, and those who participate in it must be prepared to pay the consequences. Many heroic leaders including Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi, and Nelson Mandela have made such sacrifices, but only after they felt they had exhausted other alternatives.

Media Exposure

Work with news reporters to expose environmental or political wrongdoing.

- *Use mass media to spread your message.* Radio, television, newspapers may help spread your message if you invite them to cover special events and send them news releases about your activities.
- *Use small media to spread your message.* Don't ignore using leaflets, speeches at other NGO meetings, or telephone chains to deliver your message. Good campaigns often employ a combination of well-targeted media.

Evaluate NGO Efforts

- *Evaluate action campaigns.* Formally ask yourselves whether the campaign worked. Why or why not? What's the next step? How could your organizing have been improved?
- *Evaluate the organization.* Who is being left out? Is any part of the group taking more power than another? How can we improve decisionmaking and sharing responsibilities?

Facts About Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs)

A nongovernmental organization (NGO) is a private organization, one that is not part of a government or a "for-profit" business. NGOs include everything from environmental advocacy groups, women's associations, and human rights groups to policy analysis centers, labor unions, farmer cooperatives, and tenants' associations.

There is great variety among NGOs. Some are local, some national, some work at the regional or international level. Some meet the needs of their own members. Others serve those who need help. Some give away money to others, and some receive funds. NGOs can be large or small, secular or religious. There are four basic "levels" of NGOs: grassroots, service, thematic, and coalitions.

NGOs exist in both Northern hemisphere, industrialized countries and in the developing countries of the Southern hemisphere. In the North, although some are small, community-based groups, many are large and prosperous. In the South, most NGOs are community-based, relatively small, and often fragile.

NGOs in Northern Hemisphere Countries

- Organizations founded before World War II usually developed from missionary activities. During and after World War II, religious and secular organizations such as CARE were organized to provide relief first in Europe and then in developing countries.
- Beginning in the 1960s, organizations increasingly emphasized economic development projects. After Earth Day in 1970, environmental groups increased.

NGOs in Southern Hemisphere Countries

- NGOs in developing countries are relatively new. Only about 30 percent are more than 15 years old, and only 50 percent are more than 10 years old.
- There are more NGOs in South Asia than in Africa or South America. Countries with well-established NGOs include India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and the Philippines.
- In Africa, there are fewer NGOs than in Latin America or Asia, but there is a strong tradition of community help in manycountries including Zimbabwe, Senegal, Kenya, and Burkina Faso.

Trends

- By 1989, Northern NGOs were distributing an estimated US$6.4 billion to the South. About one third of this money comes from government sources. The governments of the developed nations have partnership arrangements with NGOs to distribute and manage government aid.
- United Nations agencies are promoting community development projects by supporting indigenous NGOs and cooperation between governments and NGOs.
- The United Nations has a formal relationship with many NGOs. The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development is actively promoting participation by NGOs.
- NGOs in the developing world are growing quickly in numbers and in sophistication. NGOs are changing in three ways: (1) Southern NGOs are becoming more independent and less tied to their Northern supporters; (2) NGOs are sharing information and coordinating activities through national and global network organizations such as the Pesticide Action Network (PAN); (3) NGOs are using new communication technologies, such as fax machines and computers, to transmit information and keep in touch with NGOs in other countries.
- NGOs are playing new roles, such as legal defense and policy research, in the developing countries. Some NGOs play major roles in shaping public policy.
- Recently, many governments have welcomed the participation of environment/development NGOs asking NGOs to act as subcontractors or even creating NGOs.

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Teacher's Survey
Teacher's Guide Units

(Please use additional paper if necessary)

1. Which *World Resources Teacher's Guide* unit did you use?

___1. Biodiversity
___2. Car Trouble
___3. Citizen Action
___4. Energy, Atmosphere, and Climate
___5. Natural Resource Economics
___6. Oceans and Coasts
___7. Population, Poverty, and Land Degradation
___8. Sustainable Development
___9. Two Giants: China and India
___10. Watershed Pollution
___11. Women, Equity, and Sustainable Development

2. Course(s) in which you used *World Resources Teacher's Guide* units?

___History ___Geography ___Science
___Ecology ___Biology ___Chemistry
___Environmental Studies ___Environmental Science ___Other

3. Which sections of the unit did you find most useful?

___Teaching Strategies
___Student Enrichment Activities
___Student Handouts
___Overhead Transparency Masters
___Reading and AV Lists

4. How much do you think you will use the *World Resources Teacher's Guide* units in the future?

___Often ___Occasionally ___Rarely

5. Did you use the Goals 2000 draft national performance standards to select material from the units?

___Yes ___No

6. If yes to the above question, which performance standards did you teach?_____

_____

7. Were the recommended activities in the unit useful in teaching those standards?

___Yes ___No

8. What features could be added to the *Teacher's Guide* to make it more useful to you?

_____

_____

_____

9. In what setting did you use the *Teacher's Guide* units?

___Middle school
___High School
___10th grade
___11th grade
___12th grade
___Community college
___College or university
___Adult education
___Nature center
___Zoo
___Museum
___Other

10. Was the material appropriate for your audience?

____Yes No, because_____

11. If you used the unit in a school, how much class time did you and your students spend on it?

____Less than 1 class ____2–3 classes ____1–2 weeks

____1 class ____4–5 classes ____More than 2 weeks

12. Do you regularly teach about global environmental issues?

____Yes ____No

13. If you don't regularly teach global environmental issues, did you find this unit offered enough information and materials to construct your lesson?

____Yes No, I also needed_____

14. Did you use other WRI materials with this unit?

____Yes ____No

If yes, which ones_____

15. Because new units of the *Teacher's Guide* are being developed, it is helpful for us to learn how the materials work. Did they engage your students? Prompt lively discussion? Help make what seemed abstract issues vivid? Please be specific with negative *or* positive comments.

_____

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May we call you to discuss your suggestions?

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